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This is Marsha French interviewing Marion Pritchard at the Faith in Humankind Conference being held in Washington, DC. The date is September 19, 1984. And we'll begin. What is your complete name, please?

Marion Philippina van Binsbergen Pritchard.

And where and when were you born?

Amsterdam, November 7, 1920.

What were your parents' complete names?

My father's name was Yaakov van Binsbergen. And my mother's name was Grace Marion van Binsbergen Hyde.

And what were their occupations?

My father was a judge. And my mother did not have an occupation.

How many children were there in your family?

Myself and my brother-- two.

Could you give their names and ages?

Yes. My brother, his name is Jan Knowler-- K-N-O-W-L-E-R-- van Binsbergen. And his birth date was October 18, 1930.

Did your family belong to any particular church?

My father did not. My mother was an Anglican and an active member of the Anglican Church in Amsterdam.

Was that the name of the church, the Anglican Church?

No. The name of the church was Christ Church.

Christ Church. How often did your family attend?

My mother went just about every Sunday.

Did you go with her?

Yes.

And your brother as well?

Yes-- reluctantly, once I got to be a teenager.

Were they involved in politics in any way?

No. I know that my father voted for a relatively liberal party. But as a judge, he could not be active in politics.

Where were you living when the war began?

I was living in a town called Nijmegen-- N-Y-M-E-G-E-N-- which is about five or 10 miles from the German border.

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Could you describe the area and the people that were living there in your town?

Nijmegen-- I would say, the second or third biggest town in that particular province, surrounded by a very rural area. There was quite a bit of industry in the town itself. I think the people were mostly Catholic. I only lived there for about a year so I don't know too much about it.

You had just moved there at the time of the war?

No. I had applied to the school of social work but I was too young. You had to be 19 to be admitted. So they suggested a year of volunteer work first. And that's what I was doing in Nijmegen.

You were living on your own?

No, I was living with a minister, and his wife, and his family.

These were people you knew from your church?

No. No, they were Dutch and friends of friends of ours.

Did your family or yourself-- did you have any relationship with Jews prior to the war?

I did, my parents not particularly. I knew a lot of Jewish children in school. At the time, especially in elementary school, you didn't know who was Jewish and who wasn't. There were some kids who didn't come to school on Saturdays, so those you knew, but didn't mean very much. And then in 1934 or '35, a lot of German Jewish children came from Germany to the Netherlands. And we became somewhat aware of Jewishness.

Were any of your friends actually Jewish?

Oh, yeah.

In school.

Yeah.

Did your parents discuss-- among your family or your friends, did you discuss among your friends what was happening to the Jews?

Yes. It's interesting that I don't remember any stories that the children who joined our classes told about what was going on in Germany. But my father felt very strongly about the injustice that was being done to the Jews. My father, as I say, he's a judge, came from a long line of judges.

He believed in justice-- not law and order, but justice. And his upsetness was with the unjustness of what was going on in Germany and the failure of the Dutch government to take in-- to just open up the borders completely to any Jewish refugee.

Sounds like you discussed this at some length.

Oh, yes, extensively. I think my father's cancer-- he died in 1943-- developed as a reaction. It was an expression of his rage, that Dutch law, as soon as the Germans moved in, was superseded by Nazi ideology. That became the law. And he couldn't stand that.

Was there one specific incident that you can recall that first made you aware of the persecution of the Jews?

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No. I'd been aware of the persecution. I read the newspapers. And there was always a lot of dinnertime conversation in our family. We always had-- often had interesting people for dinner. So there was continuous discussion.

After the Nazi occupation in Holland, in Amsterdam, were you aware of any of the children ever being beaten? Or did you see the Jewish children wearing yellow stars?

Yeah. Well, the stars were ordered, every-- almost everybody wore them. Children under six were exempted. And as soon as the Nazis occupied the country, I began to talk with friends, both Jews and Gentiles, about what do we do next? But it was pretty informal.

My dedication, if you want to use that big word, was cemented when, on the way to school, to classes at the school of social work, I went past a home for Jewish children, and they were emptying it out. And the kids didn't move fast enough. And they picked the kids up wherever they could-- by an arm, or a leg, or the hair-- and threw them on the bus-- and as-- on the truck.

And as I think Elie Wiesel and a couple of other people said, how could people stand by and see it happening? Well, I stopped my bike and looked. Two other women coming down the street got so furious, they attacked the German soldiers, and they just picked the women up and threw them in the truck after the kids.

So I just sat there. So I'm one of those people who sat there and watched it happen. I think that if I had done anything, I would have followed the other women back-- they would have thrown me in the truck too.

When you did decide you were going to help, did-- was the person you decided to help someone you already knew or someone who was a stranger?

Well, we were already in the process of helping, in the sense that we were discussing with Jewish friends, what do we do? I believed from the beginning-- and that conviction was-- I'm sure came from the discussions at home and my father's attitudes. I knew very early on and believed that the Nazis were really out to exterminate all the Jews. And therefore, all this fooling around with exemption lists, and passes, and certificates, and Sperre, as they were called, and housewives-- people wanted me to do that for them. I did.

But I-- and I got in trouble with some people. They said, don't be such a pessimist. And you're making it worse for us by not thinking that-- people didn't want to believe, and you couldn't convince them. So I went along with that sort of thing. Am I answering your question?

How-- I'd like to know a little bit more about your involvement in the rescue effort. How was it that you?

I forget exactly. Well, for one thing, my-- I forget exactly what the first one was. But I remember very clearly the first child that I actually took care of. There was a couple that I knew that was in hiding. And she got pregnant. And the family that she was-- where she was, she and her husband were hiding, couldn't risk a crying infant in the house.

So they asked me to find a place for the infant. I spoke with a family in Rotterdam. And after great deliberation, they agreed that they would take the child. They had four children of their own. The mother agreed to pretend that she was pregnant so that when she had a baby in a few months, it wouldn't be so strange.

And when the baby was born in Amsterdam, I took it there and took care of it on the third floor for a week until the nurse maid that they had hired to take care of it-- because they really didn't want any part of this. They were doing their duty, but against their-- they really didn't want to do it at that time. And they just hoped the war would be over soon. I'll bypass the intermediate stages, but they ended up adopting the child.

Had you helped other children as well? Was your involvement basically with children?

Jewish parents put their children first-- or a lot of them, anyway. And I was approached-- not too many Jewish babies were born, of course, during the war because-- I don't have to explain why it didn't make sense for Jews to have babies

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at that time, except, of course, in the long-term notion. But people would ask me. And I-- not just I, the people that I was working with too, we would register them as our own illegitimate children. Because that way, they were safe-- and then find a foster home for them.

Did you hide people in your home at all?

For the last two to two and a half years of the war, I lived in a house about 20 miles outside of Amsterdam in a place called Huizen and had a man and his three small children living with me. And I'm sure that he's the one that reported me to Yad Vashem.

Were you active at all in the underground as a movement?

I didn't join, I was approached by an organization called-- I think, if I remember right, it was the [DUTCH]. But they wanted names. And they wanted to know pretty much exactly what you were doing. And I was much too afraid of being betrayed. My friends and I wanted to stay independent and minimize the risk. I had a great deal of help from quite prominent member of the underground. But I never actually joined up, and did the code name business, and all that sort of thing.

Who was this friend in the underground? Can you tell us a little about him?

Yes, of course. His name was Dr. Miek Rutgers Van der Loeff. He worked for the Amsterdam municipal telephone central. And his major contribution was establishing the telephone connections between England and also within the country. Amsterdam had a really antiquated communication system, which had been-- they put in a new one shortly before the war. But they had left all the old wires underground and not bothered with them. He, under the nose of the Germans, and together with another man-- I think his name was Carels-- C-A-R-E-L-S-- reactivated that old system for the use of the resistance.

How did you work with this man?

Very informally. I'd known him ever-- he's about 14 years-- well, he died last year. He's about-- he was about 14 years older than I was. And I've known him ever since I was born. And I'd tell him what I needed, or I need to get a message through, or-- and he'd help me. And we never talked about he was-- what he was doing. I didn't know about the telephone thing until quite towards the end of the war.

He was-- if all the people involved in resistance and saving Jews had known how to keep their mouth shut the way he did, a lot more people would have been saved. I think we focus maybe not quite enough on the negative things. Some people were well-intentioned and did what they could. But at the same time, they couldn't resist telling other people what they were doing. You're better off not helped by people like that.

In the majority of cases where you were able to help, did you approach the person? Or did the person approach you?

The persons that needed help either approached me, or somebody else told me about them.

Did everyone in your family know what you were doing?

I didn't tell them anything because it's safer for them not to know. I'm sure my father knew. But I didn't tell them anything because anything that you tell can be betrayed. My brother was 10 years younger than I was. If they-- if he had known, and if they had taken him or questioned him, how is a 10, or a 12, or a 14-year-old going to resist blabbing? You just did not tell.

Did your neighbors know?

No.

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Did anyone ever try and tell you that you shouldn't be saving Jews?

Oh, sure. Well, I didn't tell anybody that I was saving Jews. But of course, there was a lot of discussion about the Jews. And you sat and listened to it. And there was a lot of discussion there.

I think that my Dutch colleagues here might get angry if I said that. But there was antisemitism in Holland. It was in certain areas more than others, certain social groups. I would say the teachers, artists, and students were very appreciative of the values that the Jews brought to Dutch culture. But there were other groups who were not.

And I would never have thought that my father would have belonged to a club that didn't admit Jews. Now, I didn't find that out until I went to Jerusalem for the Yad Vashem award. There was a Jewish lawyer there who was the son of a Haarlem rabbi. And he lost his family-- a lot of his family in Bergen-Belsen.

But anyway, he was a young lawyer in Amsterdam who knew my father as a judge and who was very moved to meet me, not because of me but because his respect for my father as a judge. And he said to me, your father was a very great justice, but he was also a very kind man. And I knew that my father belonged to a club in Amsterdam called De Groote Club.

And this man, Yitzhak de Vries told me that De Groote Club did not admit Jews. Now, if you had told me that-- it shows how memory-- maybe it's how memory distorts, and maybe I just didn't want to know that, and maybe my father had a tinge of antisemitism because I don't think that would have stopped him from doing the right thing. He might not like somebody. I sort of feel that I'm not being loyal to him by saying that it may have been the case. But my father would not have condoned injustice to people he didn't like for whatever reason.

Did anyone ever threaten to turn you in to the authorities?

No. Somebody-- well, I did spend six months in prison. But it wasn't because anybody had turned me in.

Could you tell us something about that? What prison was it?

There was a-- it was the Amsterdam jail. And the Germans used part of it for their purposes and left part of it to the Amsterdam civil authorities for what they needed. If you wanted to study with friends, you had to spend the night because there was a curfew. So I went to study with friends one night. And these friends put out one of the illegal news sheets. They listened to the BBC, and typed it up, and distributed it. And somebody betrayed them. And they came in at midnight and just took everybody that was in the house.

How long were you in prison?

About six months.

They were interrogating you?

Yeah.

Can you tell us something about the process?

Well, my feeling was that on the one hand, they did want-- they tried to get information about who you knew and what you knew. On the other hand, I sometimes had the feeling that they just sort of played with you for their own amusement. I'm sure it was nothing like what the people in the concentration camps went through, but they did do things like take all your clothes away, leave the light on for weeks on end, leave you in the dark for a couple of days, take out the toilet facilities. And of course, the cell got filthy. And all they gave you to clean up with was a toothbrush.

They threatened at one point that they were going to cut my wrist. They started out there. And they just got that far. And of course, it's the wrong place. It should have been here. But it's all intimidation.

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And it was infuriating. I'd never been spanked as a child. My parents didn't believe in corporal punishment. And to be-- it's-- that's the one thing that, I think, sets you apart from everybody else forever after that. Having been woefully manhandled by another human being is an experience that you don't forget.

You still bear the scar on your arm from that knife.

Yeah.

How was your release secured?

I guess they ran out of space. One day, they told about 40 of us to leave. And it-- in the-- when Joel [PERSONAL NAME] gave me the medal, I don't know where he got this information, he said that I was released because of my father's judgeship in Amsterdam. But that's not true. It was typical German-- what do you call it-- arbitrariness or-- there were 40 of us that they just sent out that day.

Your father, I imagine, tried to get you out of jail?

I don't really know. He couldn't have. The Dutch guards in the Dutch part of the jail knew who he was and knew that I was there. And they would pass me notes and wink at me if they saw me. And the support-- the feeling was there. But there was no way my-- I don't think-- and I respect him for it-- if my father had been able to bribe me out, I hope he wouldn't have done it. I don't know whether he considered it.

Why?

I think that's collaboration.

Did you receive any encouragement from others about what you were doing?

The friends I worked with, certainly.

They too were involved in resisting?

It took for-- it-- they said this morning that there are 4,000 or 5,000 Righteous Gentiles. Taking care of one Jew sometimes involved 10, 20, 30 Gentiles. If there was a personality conflict-- say, you placed somebody with a family and they have a small house, it could be like having your mother-in-law move in for the duration.

If you don't like her-- personality conflicts was sometimes so strong that you couldn't leave people where they were. And you had to move them. And you had to talk to somebody about getting food for them. And you had to deal with somebody about getting-- sometimes, getting an identity card. With children, you had to get clothes. Of course, you could ask without explaining why. But the support system-- we-- all of us who worked in it I'm sure had a support system.

I would like to know something more about how you managed that. How did you manage to get clothes and papers?

Well, one of the first people that helped with papers was a Dutch artist, a sculptor, in fact, called Gerrit Jan van der Veen. And he knew how to make fake identity cards. After he was killed, there were other groups who took over. And you did know. You found out who could get you a fake identity card.

Of course, sometimes, you-- I think, I had about seven identity cards because you would lose it. And then they'd put a different picture in. And they'd have to change a lot, of course. But it's easier to start off with the real thing because with watermarks and all that sort of thing, if they looked carefully, they could have detected it. Sometimes, you needed medical care. You couldn't do it alone. You had to have a support system.

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Who did you go to when someone needed medical care?

I had a friend who was in medical school. And she knew a doctor. And well, my little brother's pediatrician, a woman doctor, helped.

How did you manage to bring these people to the doctor?

Oh, you didn't. Well, it depended. Children under six didn't have to wear stars. And you could take them to her house. She would-- sometimes you would-- it depended. You would take her to where the child was. Mostly, you put them on the back of your bicycle.

What was her name?

Freya Coene-- F-R-E-Y-A C-O-E-N-E. God, I'm amazed that I remember her. I haven't thought about her in years. For the adults, how did they get to the doctor?

I don't recall doing anything like that or having that problem. You're-- the one-- Freya Coene gave me a supply of very mild-- hopefully very mild sleeping powders so that if the Germans raided and the baby had to be kept quiet, you could give it the sleeping powder.

Was she active in the underground?

I have no idea. You didn't ask questions like that. You didn't want to know.

How did you first become aware that she would help?

Well, my brother was 10 years younger than I. And she was sort of a household fixture. She lived quite close to us. I think I-- I guess I was conceited enough to know that she was that kind of person.

How did you manage to secure food?

Black market. There was a official organization that helped you get food for people that were hidden.

What was the name of that organization?

I think it was the LO-- the Landelijke Organisatie. But I'm not quite sure. I just knew the contact person.

You would contact that person, and then what would happen?

Well, I would say that I needed ration cards. And the way ration cards were obtained was-- it changed all the time. When one time, I know, in Amsterdam, a group of people raided the office where the ration cards were kept and picked up thousands of cards. It was a wonderful-- stamps-- it was a wonderful bonus for a while. You could buy them on the black market.

And there were people-- war is a great equalizer. But the rich were still better off than the poor. And I knew several people who really didn't need the ration cards. So they would give them to me because they had enough stores of their-- they had-- what do you call it when you buy ahead of time? Oh, there's a word for it. People did it when there was a shortage of sugar in this country.

Stockpile?

Stockpile-- that's not it. But that's good enough. People had stock. There were people who had stockpiled enough who had gardens, who knew farmers. There weren't very many of them, but they had stockpiled enough that they could manage.

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Was your family well-to-do?

Not quite as well-to-do as most of our friends and acquaintances, but I'd say very comfortable?

Were either you or the person you were helping ever caught?

The Germans came at night and raided the place, but they didn't find them.

The people you were hiding?

Yeah.

This was at the time you were hiding the man and the children?

Right.

Could you tell us something about what happened that night?

Well, they-- the SS men came, led by a local policeman, a Dutch policeman, whom I'd known also for a long, long time and who everybody hated. And they didn't find the hiding place. The custom was to make people stay in the hiding place after the Germans had been because they were smart enough to know that their people had hiding places. And they'd go away and then come back an hour later, thinking that you'd let them out. I hadn't let the father out at that point. But I had gotten the children out because the baby had begun to cry. And he came back alone.

The Dutch policeman?

Right. And that's when I shot him. And that's one of my worst memories of the whole war. I'd do it again. I still can't think of anything else I could have done. I still feel guilty about killing, even a bastard like that. And that-- there, again, talk about the support system. I got a message to somebody I knew in the village whose name I've forgotten, believe it or not. But he was my contact person.

And the local undertaker put the body in a coffin with somebody who had died a normal death. So the family had the burial. They didn't know that he was buried too. And the local people and the local police, they didn't do a great-- I was scared stiff that they would go looking for him.

And probably, somebody knew that he had brought the SS to the house that night. But nothing ever happened. I think a lot of them were delighted that the son of a bitch was dead. This is no language to put on a tape.

I'd like to clarify something about this time where you were raided by the Dutch policeman when the children were out of the house in clear view and, unfortunately, you had to shoot.

No, they were in the house.

They were in the house.

This was in the middle of the night.

And you had to shoot the policeman-- I would like for you to tell us why this raid happened. Do you know why this raid happened?

They were always looking for Jews. And they knew that there were Jews hidden in that particular area of-- in fact, yeah, there's a woman here, Johtje Vos, she lived about 10 miles from where I was. And she had 36 people in her house. They raided in different ways. They raided on tips.

They raided-- I still don't know, as I say, whether this was a tip, or whether he just decided that I was the kind of person who might have somebody, or what it was. There was also one night-- if I remember right, the village had about 2,000 people. And they sent 10,000 Germans to raid the village. So that was five of them for every single person in the village.

It was very hard-- when you make a sieve like that, it's very hard to get through it. But people were moved. One part of the town would have been raided. And people were moved from one house to another. And a number were rescued. But also, a number were caught that night and deported-- and the people who took care of them.

The search was given up soon after for the policeman?

I don't know that they ever searched. I didn't go into the village. I just lay as low as possible. And I couldn't show any interest.

You were living at this time in an outlying district?

Yes.

Can you tell us something about that area where you were living?

I suppose it would be the Dutch equivalent of exurbia. People could commute from there to Amsterdam in normal times. But it-- in Holland, the 20-minute commute is considered a long one. But it was quite-- it was relatively isolated. As I say, there were about three houses on one side of the street and four or five on the other.

There was a farm at the end of the street. And that farmer gave me a quart of milk every single day. And of course, that was strictly forbidden. And there was no milk at the end. But I got my quart for the kids every single-- you asked, how did I get food?

But a farmer-- what's his name-- Brouwer-- B-R-O-U-W-E-R-- he gave me other things besides milk too. But the milk, I could count on every day. But for the rest, it was surrounded by heather, little paths through the woods. What else can I tell you?

Did you keep up your contact with the people that you had hidden?

I remained in contact with the father. I thought-- in those days, I didn't know enough to know that the first three years of life or the first two are by far the most important. And the little girl who I got when she was a week old, and the family was reunited after the war, and I thought that the best thing I could do was stay out of it, and that they could get back together and have a minor little adjustment, and live together as a happy family forever after.

She wrote to me about six or seven years ago, she had become a clinical psychologist and, in her own analysis, had become aware of the fact that her depression was due to the rage over my having abandoned her. It was like being abandoned by your own mother because I'd been the only caretaker. So now, I'm in quite close touch with her. She has two children of her own.

Where is she living at this time?

In Amsterdam. She doesn't consciously remember that period, of course.

When did--

She doesn't remember it in words. Memories are passed along in a lot of ways. Little children suffer when they're abandoned or they-- that's why it's so awful when a child loses a parent at age two or three. They can't mourn. They don't have the words to mourn. People can't comfort them. But the suffering is more acute than that of others because the mother is such an important figure.

Was this the only family that you hid for any length of time?

Yeah.

And they were with you for how many years?

Two and a half years.

At what point did your relationship-- did they decide to go and leave the house?

No, I left Holland.

When was this?

In 1945. I joined UNRRA-- United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration-- and went and worked in displaced persons camps in Germany.

And the family, where did they go?

They moved to The Hague. And he became a quite well-known professor of economics and philosophy. He became a futurologist. He lectured at Harvard and at the University of Berkeley in California. He's written a lot of books. He's 75. And he's still writing-- 77 now.

Can you tell us something about your activities in Germany and the displaced?

Well, I went for two reasons. I thought-- the purpose of UNRRA was to repatriate the people who had been brought to Germany against their will-- that means in the concentration camps, and factories, and slave labor, et cetera, et cetera. I was a trained social worker. I was ready to get out of the country for a while. I'd been stuck there for five years. And I also thought that I might find some of my Jewish friends quicker if I went there than if I just stayed at home in Holland-- and probably, partly, simply, your average 24 year old's need for adventure.

When I got there, I-- first, I worked in a Jewish camp. And then they tried to reassign me to a general camp, which I refused because there were too many people there who got past the screening teams. Because they claimed that they were afraid of the communists. They'd really been fascists and Nazi collaborators and had come to Germany voluntarily. But all you had to do in those days was tell an American that you were scared of the communists. And they said, oh, come in, come in. So I didn't want to be any part of that.

So then I went-- at that time, the-- a lot of Jews had gone back to the east-- Poland, Russia, Hungary-- and were not received with open arms. In fact, they were treated worse, sometimes, than the Germans had treated them. So they came back to Germany, especially to the American zone of Germany, encouraged by the Zionists, who wanted to put pressure on the British to open up Palestine to the Jews.

So we had a tremendous influx, again, of Jewish displaced persons into Germany in 1940-- the winter of '45, '46. And my husband and I actively helped the Zionist-- we were on the Third Army direction. But anyway, we actively helped the Zionists get people equipped, and out of the camp, and through-- however they went, through Switzerland, to Italy, and on board of the ships that took them to Israel, like the Exodus and other ships like that.

Were you married during the war?

No, I got married at the end of the war. No, no, no, sorry. I married an American who worked for UNRRA. Want any more about that? Oh.

What was he doing?

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He'd been with the Third Army. He was an officer in the American Army. The battery he commanded ended up guarding a kaserne with displaced persons. That got him interested in the displaced persons problem. He had a very high point score. So he could have gotten out of the army. He could get out of the army right away. So he unenlisted in Paris and immediately enlisted in UNRRA there-- moved right from the army into UNRRA.

At what point did you emigrate to the United States?

'47.

In what way has your war experiences affected your religious beliefs?

I don't think the war experiences did.

You still believe pretty much the same as you always have?

I was never that sure. I was brought up that way. And what you're taught when you're very little is hard to get rid of. I've since then had analytic training. I'm a certified psychoanalyst. I can't convince any-- myself or anybody else intellectually. And I can't say that I have this calling or whatever you want to call it. I did, when I was in prison-- I knew there was a lot of comfort in the notion that I was doing the right thing. And when I got to heaven, God would say, you've been a good girl. But I can't say that I really believe it.

Had you ever regretted any of the help that you had given?

Oh, no, I've just regretted being a coward at times. After I got out of jail, I was scared stiff. And there were times that I was asked to help and I'd find an excuse not to. And the excuse was always very well-rationalized-- I've got to take care of these three little kids. I'm responsible for them. If I go out tonight and tell so-and-so that there may be a raid tonight, and I leave the kids alone, I shouldn't do that. But how much of that was real and how much was rationalization, I don't know.

Were there quite a few less chances you had taken after you got out of prison then?

Especially for the first three months, I'm sure there were.

And then how-- what changed you?

Well, you just get caught up in it. If you don't do it, somebody can die. So you do it again.

Has your war experiences affected your political involvement?

I don't think the war experiences particularly did. I haven't been very political before the war. When I came to this country, I found that with the same relatively-- my father belonged to a party that was called the Liberal State Party. But it was a conservative party.

Now, with the same set of principles and with which in Holland I was a conservative, in this country, I turned out to be to the left of center. But I never got very-- I don't care about-- I don't see much difference between the Democratic and the Republican Party. I go by people. I'm afraid, I've gotten sort of cynical about the political process, especially now.

What do you mean by especially now?

Well, I think Reagan's a disaster. And I think that it's so easy to-- I mean, for this movie actor to be able to put on this beautiful act of being the charismatic father of the country, and how that fools everybody into denying the political realities, and the influence of money on politics, and the influence of the people who make weapons-- and I'm very naive about it all. But still, I'm cynical. There aren't enough Elie Wiesels. And there are far too many of superficial

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Reagans and James Watts. And I can't think of the rest of them.

So your attitudes are not much different from those you held 40 years ago?

No, I don't think so.

Is there anything you can think of that we've not covered today that you would like to say?

I think that the one thing that has not been covered or addressed anywhere is the emotional relationships that developed between some of the hidden and some of the rescuers and how that affected-- one thing that happened-- I'm not talking personally now. I'm telling you the general story. One thing you did, if you had Jews in the house, or anybody-- pilots or whatever-- you took damn good care that there were only as many beds slept in as there were legitimate people in the house.

In other words, say there were four Gentile adults in the house and you had three Jewish adults. You had to have people sleep together so that if the Germans came and the Jews went into the hiding place, there was only one bed slept in and one pillow, et cetera, et cetera. Some-- if males and females go to bed together for long enough, and have some kind of liking for each other, and it develops some kind of liking for each other, and they're living under this tremendous stress, sexual and emotional relationships are going to develop.

Did you see that personally?

Oh, yes. A lot of people can tell you about that. But that's one of the things I'm sure none of us wants to talk about, even if it did involve us.

Did you have such a relationship?

I don't want to talk about that. That's personal. One of the funny ones was a man I knew, a painter who-- a ballet dancer who was gay. And he was placed with a woman painter who was heterosexual. And she decided that she was going to straighten him out. And he came to me after two weeks and said, Marion, for Christ's sake, I'd rather go to a concentration camp. I can't stand this.

But I think that that's a subject that has not been addressed. And I don't know anybody that's willing to talk about it. But I think that people who are working as earnestly and seriously as this Memorial Council should be aware of it. And maybe they can find some people who will talk.

What do you think will become of that research into this area?

I don't know. I don't know what the researchers' goals are. I mean, I know some of them, obviously. They've been talked about here. But for a total understanding, if anybody ever studies how many divorced, how many families that were separated-- couples that were separated during the war and got together again after the war stayed together, and what the reasons were that they got divorced or stayed together, then this would be an aspect of it.

Were there many people who did sleep together or be in the same house in hiding together who remained together?

I don't know. I left Holland right after the war. The war was over in May. And I left in June. And I went back for occasional visits. But I never went and investigated. For 40 years, I never thought-- I hardly ever thought about all this.

When they called about the medal, I asked them to mail it. I had no idea that there was a ceremony involved. And when my sons got invitations to the ceremony, one had some idea. He sort of vaguely knew that I'd been involved because he became a conscientious objector. And as he had to write about his CO status, he talked to his father and to me and about our attitudes. And some of it-- I mentioned that I'd been involved in a way.

But my other two called up and said, hey, you? How come you never told us? You just didn't.

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How many children do you have?

Three.

And they all know now about your involvement?

Well, they all came to the ceremony. And the council was pretty specific.

Was your husband involved in the liberation of the camps at all?

Yeah, Bergen-Belsen-- no, Buchenwald.

He was. Can you tell us something?

He was one of the first. He doesn't talk about it. I didn't know that until this all came up. And he was one of the first troops into Buchenwald. And he said, they were only there so briefly that he didn't see very much. But he was one of the liberators in Buchenwald.

Was that a momentum for him to work with UNRRA?

Probably. It was-- he always says that it was this kaserne with displaced persons that they were put in charge of.

Is there any comment that you would like to leave for your children and grandchildren?

God, I'd love to be very profound or something. But I really can't do it. Well, what comes to mind is for my husband's 10th college reunion, he went to Harvard. All the students were asked to write something for one of those yearbooks to put out.

And if I remember correctly, he wrote, I got married. I have three children. I tried to pay my taxes and do the right thing whenever I can find out what the hell right is. And I think that's what I would like to say. Do the right thing if you can find out what the right thing is. And that's not easy.

I thank you very much for participating in this interview.

Oh, it wasn't. You're one of the best interview.

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